

## **Kansas Codes Collaborative 3/26/14 Meeting Notes**

**Members Present:** Tim Ryan, Sam Alpert, Neal Ezell, Rod Haney, Kyle McLaren (for Thomas Stolz), Jerry Mallory, George Schluter, Greg Talkin, Barry Walthall

**Guests:** Jim Boone, Deje Glassburn, Gary Highfill, Bruce Snead

**KCC Energy Division Staff:** Liz Brosius

### **Opening remarks**

Tim Ryan, Chair, thanked everyone for coming and suggested that the discussion of the questions for the 2014 energy codes survey be moved up to the top of the agenda. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

### **2014 energy codes survey**

Tim Ryan asked for feedback on the list of questions that had been compiled on the draft survey document. Jerry Mallory suggested the addition of a question about whole-house mechanical ventilation. Rod Haney thought it would be good to find out what energy provisions were currently adopted and what the obstacles were to codes adoption in the jurisdiction. Greg Talkin noted that many of the questions specifically targeted the 2012 energy code and it was agreed that the questions would be revised to be more inclusive.

Deje Glassburn asked whether the focus of the survey was on residential or commercial codes compliance. George Schluter noted that there were more likely to be compliance issues with residential construction given the differences in the commercial code requirements.

Tim Ryan stated that the goal of the survey was to capture the key energy provisions and possible amendments to compliance practices, not to catalog every amendment to the adopted codes. Bruce Snead said he thought the survey questions, with the additional suggestions, looked fine. Liz Brosius said she would revise the draft survey, based on the suggestions, and send it back out for a final review.

## **Mechanical systems: residential code requirements and compliance issues**

Tim Ryan opened the discussion by describing the situation in Overland Park, noting that although the Manual J requirements had been part of the code for quite a while, they hadn't necessarily been enforced. Sizing of mechanical equipment remained an issue, he said, and they continued to find that equipment was oversized (by as much as 250% in some instances).

The question was raised regarding the expertise of the city/county staff that were reviewing plans: how many plan reviewers were versed in sizing mechanical equipment? Overland Park and Lawrence were two that currently have staff with that expertise.

There was a general discussion of whether jurisdictions required compliance with Manual J for furnace replacements. Learning that Lawrence does require this, George Schluter said he thought Lawrence had more community support for efficiency than many other jurisdictions. Bruce Snead suggested that existing houses were likely to have oversized equipment and wondered how the group might target that issue. Jim Boone asked whether Kansas utilities were involved in sizing of mechanical equipment, as they were in some other states?

Barry Walthall explained how Lawrence had achieved the level of compliance in this area. He said that they'd formed a mechanical advisory board during a previous codes adoption process, and although that amendment delayed the adoption by three months, in the ensuing 8 years, contractors and code officials have gained experience and homeowners are learning that bigger equipment doesn't equate to more comfort. George Schluter noted that Lawrence has greater support from consumers than he sees in Johnson County and the greater Kansas City area. Neal Ezell agreed that Lawrence consumers are already asking for higher-efficiency homes.

Gary Highfill asked about the cost of compliance with energy efficiency code in Lawrence. Neal Ezell said it depended, but that it could be done with relatively little impact. He noted that contractors building energy-efficient homes were still working during the recession.

In response to a question from Jim Boone about whether educating consumers about cost-effective energy efficiency was the key, there was a general discussion about education and outreach and the role it plays in communities that adopt energy codes. Strategies such as collaborating with utilities on outreach and using news stories to educate the general public were also mentioned. Although outreach and education were viewed as valuable, the members agreed that the Collaborative needed to stay focused on clarifying the compliance picture around the state and identifying ways to

support compliance efforts in those jurisdictions that have already adopted energy codes.

### **Codes/compliance training**

Tim Ryan asked for suggestions about what type of training would be most beneficial and who the target audience should be: code officials, homebuilders and other contractors. There was general agreement that many would benefit from training on the ACCA manuals, though this training might be costly.

Tim Ryan suggested that everyone come to the next meeting with suggestions for specific types of training and possible venues.

### **Other business, next steps**

Neal Ezell provided a brief overview of The SAVE Act, Senate Bill 1106, which would improve federal mortgage underwriting by including a home's expected energy cost savings when determining the value and affordability of energy-efficient homes. He noted that currently it's harder for builders to justify the added costs of energy efficiency when home appraisers don't factor in the value of lower utility bills. The bill directs the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to issue updated underwriting and appraisal guidelines. He noted that the bill had broad-based support, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Realtors, and National Association of Homebuilders.

Rod Haney said that the ICC Heart of America Chapter would hold its annual meeting next week, from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup>. He said he'd give an update on the Collaborative at the business meeting, and Tim Ryan said he'd send his PowerPoint presentation from the first meeting.

Sam Alpert said the 2014 KC Commercial Real Estate Expo is May 7, 2014, at the Overland Park Convention Center.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 16, 2014, at 1:30 p.m., in the KCC's Third Floor Hearing Room, Topeka.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.**

More information about the Codes Collaborative and building energy codes is available on the Energy Division's web pages: <http://kcc.ks.gov/energy/index.htm>